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—John C. Cort

THE

Commonweal

The Silent Revolution

by Francois Houtart

Bitter Harvest in Algeria

by Robert Barrat

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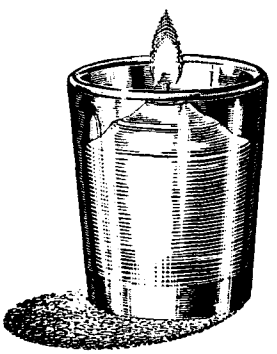

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The Commonweal

week by week

DISSENT IN THE CATHOLIC PRESS

SOMEWHAT to our own surprise, we recently found ourselves in general agreement with an editorial position of the Brooklyn *Tablet* on the question of "open and honest debate." This happens so seldom that we went back and read the editorial in question all over again, but the results were the same. We disagree with the emphasis, and we do not share the *Tablet*'s view as to how well its own editorial policy lives up to its professed principles. But in its plea for free and frank discussion of political and social questions in the Catholic press we are in substantial agreement.

The *Tablet* was commenting on a recent address by Martin H. Work, excutive director of the National Council of Catholic Men. In it, Mr. Work stressed that there is no one single Catholic position on most current social questions. What he had in mind, apparently, were such controversy-producing issues as the "right-to-work" laws, the Genocide Convention, or the guaranteed annual wage. Many Catholic authorities have spoken out on these matters, he said, and their statements should be carefully studied. But it should be understood that these do not represent official positions of the Church and that these issues are open for debate and discussion.

Is it possible to speak of a "Catholic position" on these matters? The weight of Catholic opinion may lean heavily one way or the other, Mr. Work granted, but there is no one position which all must take. He emphasized, though, that before proclaiming opinions one should carefully study the reasoning of the social encyclicals and various papal pronouncements—a necessary warning, since many seem to have only the vaguest idea of Catholic thought on such matters. But in any event, Mr. Work said, "don't brand those who differ with you as perfidious infidels—even though they may be."

We could not agree more—though the heartiness of our assent is probably due in large part to the number of times certain right-wing publications like the *Tablet* have impugned the motives of the editors of this magazine because of our criticism of Senator McCarthy or our lack of filial devotion to Francisco Franco. As to what prompted all this renewed dedication to free discussion by organs like the *Tablet*, we may be excused if we have our own theory.

THE tide of Catholic editorial opinion in this country, we think, has begun to turn. For years Catholic papers like the *Tablet* went their own way merrily, sniping at the UN, making hay out of the liberals and generally taking an extremely right-wing position on most socio-political questions. During this period, such papers were very ready to refer to those who disagreed as "so called" Catholics and to impugn their religious as well as their political orthodoxy. After all, who in the Catholic press elevated the McCarthy controversy into a matter of faith and morals? Not the anti-McCarthy Catholic publications, surely.

Recently, however, Catholics in this country have become increasingly aware of the content and spirit of the social encyclicals and of the papal peace plans. These have always been pro-social reform, pro-union, pro-international organization and anti-nationalistic, anti-*laissez faire*. To an increasing and encouraging extent, diocesan papers and Catholic magazines have begun to reflect this point of view and general approach. (Witness, for example, the strongly pro-UN resolution passed at the last convention of the Catholic Press Association.)

Now the right wing sections of the Catholic press have suddenly awakened to the fact that they represent a minority position as far as Catholic thought on such social questions goes; they have become more and more sensitive to being hit over the head with pertinent papal quotes with which their own editorial policies do not jibe. From this fact, we think, comes the new and somewhat startling respect for the value of dissent, the keen awareness of the dangers involved in demanding absolute conformity on every issue, large and small. Now it is

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not the liberal but the right-winger who needs to insist on the right to disagree on matters which are not strictly those of faith and morals.

Considerable confusion has long existed in this area, we believe—confusion which could easily have been avoided. As matters stand right now, the very concept of the diocesan press as the "official" organ of a diocese is befuddling to many people. Such a paper is "official" in the sense that it may be owned by the diocese and that it is the medium through which notice is given of the Bishop's appointments and activities; on matters of faith and morals the diocesan paper will certainly give an "official" teaching. But when the diocesan paper comments on prudential temporal matters, that view is not official—it is in the area of interpretation and opinion. The same thing is true of magazines published by religious communities.

There are many matters on which, by their very nature, there simply is no one Catholic position. The editors of this magazine, for example, are Catholic laymen. The magazine itself is primarily concerned with the temporal order, and the editors endeavour to bring Catholic principles to bear on prudential, day-to-day issues. If we worked on a diocesan paper, our opinions on something like the merits of Senator McCarthy would be, as far as we can see, no more "official" or binding on all Catholics than they are now—which is to say they would have as much force as we could bring to them as individual Catholic journalists, neither more nor less.

NEXT WEEK

WILLIAM PFAFF writes about the Belgian Congo and the way its administrators conceive their role.

"Their plan is to create a solid, prosperous native bourgeoisie. They want no Nehrus; they want native burghers sitting in the doors of shops, frowning upon radicals and reformers . . . The Belgians are stubbornly convinced that if they can create a nation of stolid, conservative, middle-class Belgians in black skins they will not have to worry about the Congo. A bourgeois nation will see the economic advantage of remaining associated with Belgium. A bourgeois nation busily making money will have no time for African nationalism or ideology. A missionary, a White Father, remarked, 'We are replacing the natives' old paganism with the new paganism.' From bush to bicycles—and dangling in the economic future automobiles, radios, the glamorous tinware of the West. Such is the bait by which the Belgians hope to distract the native from adventures in nationalism."

For our part, we would like to see more editors face this problem frankly. The *Indiana Catholic and Record,* official organ of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, does so. At the head of its editorial column, the *IC&R* carries this notice in bold type: "The opinions expressed in these editorial columns represent a Catholic viewpoint—not necessarily THE Catholic viewpoint. They are efforts of the editors to serve public opinion within the Church and within the Nation." More editors might follow this example.

In any case, whatever the reasons which lay behind the *Tablet*'s editorial tribute to open and honest debate, we are all for it. If Catholic editors have a minority point of view, we believe they should state it. But we think they should make it clear that it is their own opinion, and not an official position which all Catholics must follow. It is a little late, but it is still better late than never.

SCIENTISTS' WARNING

ALBERT Einstein's "last will and testament" to the world was a fitting one—a plea for the abolition of war. Warning that another war "would threaten the very existence of mankind," the great scientist urged the governments of the world "to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purposes cannot be furthered by a world war." They must, he said, "find peaceful means for settlement of all matters of dispute between them." The problem we must face, he wrote, is "stark and dreadful and inescapable—shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce war?"

Professor Einstein's warning was contained in a letter written to Bertrand Russell shortly before his death, and was released by Lord Russell as a statement signed by himself and seven other leading world scientists. There can be no doubt that the statement expresses the forebodings of mankind.

And yet there were famous scientists who refused to sign—among them men who surely abhor the prospect of universal destruction as deeply as did Albert Einstein. One of those who refused, Dr. Arthur H. Compton, said that he did not sign because, though he approved the "general objectives" of the statement, he could not support it in detail. And Dr. Harold Urey refused to sign because it seemed to him the statement was "completely obvious to anyone." In addition, he stated, "there is no practical way to implement [the statement] outside of what present governments are doing."

In these two cases, of those scientists who signed and those who felt they could not, the great paradox of thermonuclear weapons has been written

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large. It is this: these weapons undoubtedly would cause unimaginable horror and destruction if they were ever used, and yet they may at present prove the only force capable of preserving peace. Those who signed Albert Einstein's statement gave prophetic warning of the folly of war in a thermonuclear age; those who refused to sign bore witness to the complexities of the concrete historical situation, to the danger for peace if the West should renounce the manufacture of these weapons until effective world disarmament can be obtained.

Dr. Compton, for example, stated that he would sponsor another statement to be signed by leading scientists which would stress that the fear of atomic weapons would not stave off the danger of war over a long period, though it might preserve peace for the present. Such a statement, it seems to us, though it would lack the deeply prophetic truth of the Einstein-Russell plea, might make a more immediate contribution toward the problem we face. For though the problem we must solve is the abolition of war, we must solve it in relationship to the existing facts of world power, not by retreat from them.

This is the real and terrible challenge. One shudders to think what would happen were thermonuclear weapons ever used, but one also shudders to think what would surely have happened to the world in the past ten years if this nation had not manufactured these weapons—or if it now renounced them unilaterally. The problem certainly remains the abolition of war, but its solution remains painful and complex—a truth which statements, even the most prophetic ones, sometimes tend to obscure.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

THIS is the time of year when one suddenly becomes aware more than ever of children-in-the-flesh. School is just out and they seem to fill the streets and backyards and playgrounds with vitality and beauty—signs of laughing, leaping hope for the nation and the world. The surprising thing is that they look so normal. Even in the unfavorable conditions of a great city—to dramatically understate the case—they manage to play ball and hop-scotch and shout and walk along with a towel under their arm fresh from a swim.

This picture must be quite surprising, indeed, to one who has contact with life only through the secondary mode of certain sections of the public press. Here youth is presented as a vicious sub-caste organized into gangs which are on a continual "rumble" or perpetually engaged in "orgies" or "pushing" dope. On turning a corner and coming upon a group of adolescents, one might almost expect to be felled by a hail of bullets from a battery of "zip guns."

This is not to imply that there is no juvenile delinquency problem; there certainly is. But it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that certain sections of the public press have been irresponsible in their presentation of a delicate and grave situation. To create an atmosphere wherein the "hope of the nation" tends to think of itself as notoriously criminal is dangerous in the extreme.

The problems of true prudence and accent and discretion are always with a society bearing the "burden" of a free-press system. Toward the end of World War II, for example, there was a plethora of articles about the "problem" of the returning veteran; from what was written then great numbers of families of returning G.I.'s must have been frightened half to death. The same thing is happening now with children.

Freedom and responsibility go together—absolutely; and this applies especially to those professionally engaged in the pursuit and dissemination of truth.

SHORT-RANGE HOPES

EACH era holds its unique perils and the problems of one time cannot be answered by a simple appeal to the lessons of another. The affairs of nations are not static and the test of successful diplomacy is its ability to adapt itself to changed situations. It would be well for Americans to remember these obvious truths as the world enters into a new period of negotiation between nations this summer.

The great peril which faced Western diplomacy in the early 1940's, for example, was the peril of naive optimism. The myth of our "great Russian ally" trapped us into unwise concessions and premature disarmament in the hope of an easy peace. We then learned the hard way that "you can't trust the Russians," and we grew bitter.

Now it is a decade later and it is a time of negotiations again. The great peril which faces us today, it seems, is not the naive optimism of ten years ago but a pessimism so unalterable that we may be unable to meet a new challange. The present danger is not that Americans will put too much faith in diplomacy or trust too easily in Moscow's word, but that they will refuse to give diplomacy any chance whatsoever to make adjustments between the world's two hostile camps.

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Having said this, we must anticipate inevitable criticism and observe that, no, we do *not* believe that the long-range objectives of Communism have changed. The Communist nations still look toward the universal destruction of capitalism and the imposition of their system—by force and violence if necessary—throughout the world. Nor do we believe that our own long-range objectives have changed. They remain—and should remain—the destruction of totalitarian tyranny and the extension of individual freedom to those peoples now enslaved. But short-term objectives—situations here and now—have changed, and this is what gives diplomacy a new chance in this summer of 1955.

There is by now real evidence for believing that Soviet tactics have been altered and that, for whatever reason, the new Soviet leaders may desire some lessening of international tensions. We would, of course, be fools if we thought their desire sprang from altruistic motives, but we would be fools too if we ignored the chance this may give us for lessening the immediate dangers of war. We must not permit the Soviet Union to take advantage of us, but we must ourselves take advantage, through diplomacy, of whatever weaknesses may have led the Soviet Union to its present more flexible attitude.

No one expects long-range solutions from the present flurry of diplomacy. Such solutions will not be found now; they will probably not be found in our lifetime. But we can search for short-range solutions in the hope of averting war this year, next year, perhaps for ten or fifteen, or twenty years. The chances for this seem better now than they have at any time since 1946 and that is why the world, in spite of past disillusionments, looks with renewed hope toward Geneva. For though diplomacy promises us only a chance for peace, a chance is the most we can have. Never before in history has so little been so much; we must therefore be willing to make historic efforts to obtain it.

WHO PAYS?

A RECENT story in the New York *Times* points up the increasing difficulty of maintaining satisfactory public transportation in this highly mobile culture. "American transit is the American success story in reverse. Instead of offering a better product at less cost to more people, it is offering a deteriorating product at greater cost to fewer people." High costs have begotten high fares and this has resulted in fewer patrons which leads to still higher fares and worse service which makes it worthwhile for more people to drive their own cars to work and market, and so the unhappy pattern continues.

Concomitant with this has been a history of worsening labor relations, especially during the past year: "Scranton, Pa., has been without mass public transportation since April 5." And many other cities are suffering long strikes, too. The driver's lot is not a happy one, and he is demanding increased compensation.

A look at a bus driver's face during a rush hour as he makes change, answers questions, maneuvers his huge vehicle in impossible traffic situations while attempting to maintain a schedule makes one wonder if there actually could be such a thing as unreasonable demands for better wages and working conditions. American unions must have been in a weakened condition, indeed, when they permitted the abolition of the post of bus conductor. Nor are subways the most rewarding of all possible places to work all one's life.

Public transportation is a service—one among many. There is garbage collection and fire fighting and teaching and nursing and many others. They are becoming increasingly important as a smaller and smaller working force is necessary to produce goods. Our people are demanding more and better services and, what is perhaps just as important, the very construction of the civilization increasingly demands them.

We are making our choices and so we must pay. But there seems to be a tacit assumption on the part of some that others can be *expected* to sacrifice themselves for our (financial) well being: I want to have my garbage collected frequently and my street kept clean, but I feel a little reluctant about paying good wages to the men who heave heavy, stinking ash cans and swill pails onto trucks early and late, in all weather.

This age is more than the atomic age; it is the age of close interdependence. This is true not only on the level of international politics, but also, and perhaps even more fundamentally, on the civic level. Simple utility, to plead on the lowest possible plane, demands a realization of the efficacy of a modicum of this spirit. To be concrete: if, for example, the common good of a city—the health, mental and physical, of the citizens, their prosperity, and the beauty of the place, and so forth—demands a subsidized five cent subway fare, then this must be the order of the day. And this even at the risk of possible tent-sulking on the part of the few. The stone-age ideal that the sole measure of the good of a thing is whether or not a profit can be realized on it must be declared null and void if we are to continue to function in an orderly and sane manner.

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The Silent Revolution

"A MAJOR REVOLUTION INVOLVING THE SOCIAL ORDER IS ADVANCING RAPIDLY IN LATIN AMERICA, CARRYING EVERYTHING BEFORE IT"

FRANCOIS HOUTART

POLITICAL upheavals are familiar enough in Guatemala, Cuba, Paraguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua and the other Latin American countries. Yet these are but a relatively minor aspect of the major revolution which convulses the Latin American continent today. This major revolution involves the social order, and it is advancing rapidly in every Latin American country, carrying everything before it. Economic factors are the basis for its transformation of this continent, just as they were the foundation for the transforming of Europe at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

Latin America remains chiefly a supplier of farm commodities and raw materials. In the last fifteen years production has materially increased. Since 1939 Mexico and Peru have improved their production by 61 and 73 per cent respectively. Mining too has increased, having doubled since before the war. This is due both to the discovery of new products and a large rise in the production of old ones.

Industrialization also is making great headway—especially in Brazil and Argentina, not to mention Mexico and Chile. New factories and industrial communities have sprung up where but a few years ago there were only the waving grasses of the pampas or the vegetation of virgin forests. Europe and North America have invested capital, built factories, organized production there. Since 1939 industrial production has doubled in such countries as Mexico, Chile and Brazil. Where Argentine had 48,245 factories in 1937, there were 80,436 eleven years later. In Uruguay the figures rose from 10,549 to 24,296. All this has led to a great rise in Latin American exports.

In recent decades the airplane has been effecting a complete change-over in transportation and communications on this continent. A country like Colombia, which had been cut off from the rest of the world due to its mountainous terrain and the virtual impossibility of building highways and railroads, is now linked to all points of the continent by airways, which have become the principal means of transportation in Latin America. Wherever you travel it is still common to see the natives, Indian or Negro, in their traditional dress, carrying their baskets or sacks just as their ancestors did three or four centuries ago—but now taking their places in a DC-6 or a Convair in the most natural fashion imaginable.

At the same time, technical and sanitary progress has brought about a continuing diminution in infant mortality in Latin America. The rate remains very high in certain regions, but the figures are shrinking throughout the continent, and in Argentina and Uruguay high infant mortality is already a thing of the past. Accompanying this development is an increase in the normal human life span. It is still possible to find certain areas, especially in the forests of Brazil, where the average life expectancy is not even twenty years. But progress in hygiene, especially in the rural areas, is producing increasingly greater longevity.

These economic and technical constituents of the Latin American revolution, however, are only the bony framework. When people speak of progress the world over, or in Latin America particularly, they refer to such elements. But this attitude fails to take sufficient recognition of the fact that these material elements supply only a starting point, that true revolution and true progress are preeminently human, and consequently social, developments.

WE might consider the fact that since 1920 the continent has almost doubled in population (the figure for 1952 is 172 million). There is no doubt that this continent can feed many more people than it now contains. Yet natural resources have not yet been sufficiently exploited—nor has agriculture been adequately developed and mechanized—to permit an extremely rapid population growth. There are figures to show that the pace of investments in Latin America does not keep up with the increase in population and that therefore the standard of living is not slated to rise in the years just ahead. One effect of the impact of technics is therefore to ac-

Abbé Houtart, secretary to Cardinal Van Roey of Malines, Belgium, recently traveled through Latin America.

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centuate the contrast in living standards between the wealthy few and the Latin American masses.

Another social consequence of the economic transformation of this continent is the shift from a rural to an urban society, for the Latin American economy, long predominantly agricultural, is becoming more and more industrial and urban. All the large cities have doubled in population in the last ten or fifteen years and some seventeen million people now live in cities of at least a million inhabitants. Obviously, the effects of passing from one civilization to another almost without any period of transition are catastrophic for individuals, families, and society as a whole.

Latin America's rural civilization is still made up in large part of Indians and peoples of mixed blood, living under conditions which have not changed for four or five centuries. It is not surprising that industrialization and the exploitation of oil and mineral resources have brought in their train a social revolution. All too often, however, the conditions accompanying this industrialization are inhuman. Here we find a capitalism often lacking in human or ethical restraints. In some places there is a shameful exploitation of native labor by American or European capitalists. In others there is instead an indigenous capitalism which resorts, unhappily, to quite the same methods.

Whether it be in the sugar refineries of Cuba, the plantations of Guatemala or Nicaragua, the oil fields of Venezuela, the mines of Bolivia, the farming districts of Chile or the factories of Sao-Paulo, everywhere we encounter similar conditions. Haiti may not be representative, but at Port au Prince the Haitian American sugar company employs workers but six months of the year because this is a seasonal industry. An unskilled worker gets $1.06 a day, a semi-skilled $1.25. A foreman, after twenty years in the refinery, earns $3.25 daily. There is no social security except for free medical care when accidents occur on the job. The Haitian infant mortality rate is extreme, and housing indescribably bad. The cost of living is outrageously high, as the economy is based on that of the United States. A suit of ordinary quality costs about $30 and a pair of shoes $10. The rent for two rooms in a poorer district can run as much as $15 to $20 a month. Rice, the principal food staple, sells for twenty cents a pound. Even if one considers the facts of industrial life in Haiti as one extreme, they still give some idea of the dimensions of the problem.

Because there is tremendous unemployment (since the big companies buy extensive farm lands displacing the small cultivators, who then flock to the city) the sugar company need make no effort at all to get workers. Some workers have to walk seven miles each way to and from their jobs. There is no organized transportation and the company takes no responsibility about providing it. When workers complain about their low wages, management tells them to go elsewhere if they are dissatisfied, that hundreds of workers are waiting to take their place. That is true. A group of workers once tried to organize a union. It was immediately suppressed by the company: some of the leaders were fired; others were bought off.

Bolivia, like Haiti, may not be the best example to choose. But there I saw a mining village of six thousand Indians, perched on the side of a mountain. Special permission is required to visit there. The miners work eight hours a day; the three shifts cover the full twenty-four hours. The men work deep down in the mines while a number of women labor near the surface. The family life of the village is completely disorganized by this work in shifts. There are no holidays the whole year round, not Sundays nor even Easter or Christmas. The company which owns the mines builds its workers' living quarters; I would not want to put cattle in many of these dwellings. Some are simply wooden barracks filled with straw. Certain of these straw-packed hovels are called "hot beds" because every eight hours they welcome a new shift of sleeping men.

There are also new homes of concrete with sheet iron roofs. These provide one room for each family although some families have as many as ten children. A miner earns the equivalent of fifteen cents a day; one of the engineers gets over $2500 a month. The mining company has built a church for the Indians. With 6,000 inhabitants perhaps fifty people can squeeze into the church. A needy missionary who tries to conduct his apostolate under these conditions has himself declared that it is only the "opium of the people."

THESE examples are enough to show that the very conditions of industrialization held to be progress in Latin America are far from embodying real progress when it comes to the living standards and social life of the inhabitants. It is therefore not surprising that the Marxist ideology has begun to spread. Of course, the great urban masses, and even more the peasants in the rural areas, are not yet very greatly influenced by Marxism. Ignorance, illiteracy, difficulties in communications, the lack of a basis for comparison with better living conditions, the apathy of the Indian masses and the climate, are all elements which hold back the growth of Marxism among the people. Yet Marxism makes inroads through two very important channels: the universities and the new workers' organizations.

In the universities the Marxist student organizations

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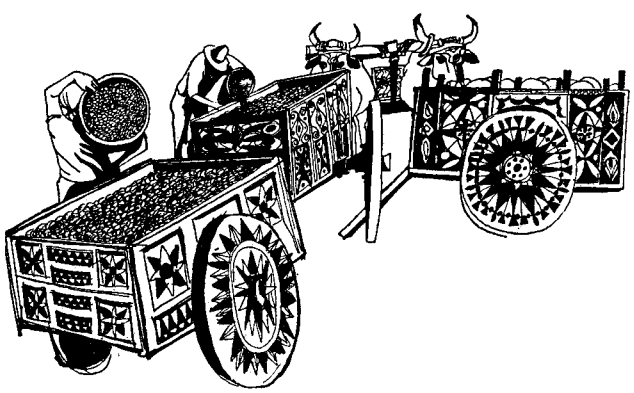
are often the most active, if not the most powerful. Indeed, the young intellectuals, who are much more conscious than the masses of the economic situation of their country, see Marxism as the economic and social solution of their problems. Moreover, it also seems to supply an answer to their needs for an ideology and a vehicle for their youthful, and characteristically South American, enthusiasm.

The lack of other coherent theories on the social and economic order leads many students—even those from fairly well-to-do homes—to view Marxism as the only solution. The social teachings of the Church are practically unknown in Latin American universities, which traditionally have been centers of nationalism and anti-clericalism.

The labor organizations are almost all of Marxist inspiration—especially the different workers' mutual aid or cooperative groups. Often they are camouflaged as government organizations—as in Mexico or Bolivia. In Argentina, although the labor unions are Peronist, it is no secret that the Communists hold many of the key posts, although for the moment they pose as more Peronist than the Peronists. In Brazil there is a similar situation.



A final social consequence of the great transformation now taking place is the growing influence of Latin America in international politics. The Latin American bloc is coming to be a force to be reckoned with. Its role in international organizations is increasingly important. That is why the economic and social destiny of Latin America can no longer be a matter of indifference to anyone. The character of the ideology and social system which ultimately prevails there will greatly influence the direction taken by international organizations in world affairs.

It is estimated that at least one hundred and fifty million inhabitants of the Latin American continent are baptized Catholics. It is the most homogeneous part of the world from a religious point of view. Yet the Church is confronted by three major problems.

The first and foremost of these is lack of priests. For this vast population, spread out over an immense continent, there are about twenty thousand Catholic priests; more than twenty times as many people as there are in Belgium are served by only twice as many priests. There are several reasons for this. When the Spanish and Portuguese were forced out of Latin America, they had not established a single diocesan seminary. Moreover, the two or three universities boasting faculties of theology were soon suppressed by the new republics. Today, after more than a century of labor, each country, if not each ecclesiastical province, has its own major seminary. New seminaries are also under construction. But the peoples themselves are seldom of the sort that produce vocations to the priesthood. When political independence was achieved there was a mass of several million Indians who had been superficially converted (and often somewhat by force), a population of mixed blood often no farther developed than the pure-bred native population, and finally a growing number of immigrants, especially Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians. The latter continued to flock to those shores throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Unlike the immigrants to North America they did not bring many priests with them. Somehow the religious authorities had the impression that the Latin American countries were Catholic countries already, and consequently did not realize their great need. The original scarcity of priests itself has greatly contributed to the subsequent lack of vocations.

The political history of the Latin American republics has generally been rather turbulent. All of them have had anti-clerical regimes; there were bloody religious persecutions in Mexico and Ecuador. Anti-religious policy has been extreme in Argentina and Brazil. An anti-clerical atmosphere has greatly held back the Church and prevented the building up of a native clergy.

Also, there is a sociological reason for serious vocation problems: the lack of a middle class throughout the continent. There has been some progress, but generally speaking, aside from the tiny minority of the very wealthy, the Latin American people live in a deplorable state of material and cultural poverty. Such conditions seldom produce many religious vocations.

THE transformation the continent is now undergoing therefore has serious religious consequences. In a rural context it was possible to transmit religious values of faith and piety without too much difficulty, even when there were not enough priests. There is no question that the rural masses, including the Indians, have a very real faith. Although it is not a very enlightened faith, and because of ignorance, is often mingled with elements of superstition, it is nevertheless impressive.

Unfortunately, when these rural masses move to the

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cities, they soon abandon their religious practices, and little by little, after a generation or two, even their faith. How could it be otherwise in cities where parishes comprise from twenty thousand up to a hundred thousand people? How could it be otherwise when their manner of life is rudely and completely changed, when the unity of human life represented by the geographical focus of the village no longer exists, when disintegration of the individual and the family brought on without transition by a poorly organized urban milieu attacks the very foundations of religion in these simple and uninformed people?

Protestant Action throughout the Latin American continent presents another serious problem for the Church. Since the Communist advance in the Far East, more and more Protestant missionaries, preeminently North Americans, have been sent to Latin America—they now number in the thousands.

The first problem that must be solved is to recruit candidates for the priesthood. This cannot be done without developing a native clergy. But it is not possible for Latin America to surmount this religious crisis, and achieve a new integration in a society completely in a state of flux, without the help of clergy from abroad. This is one of the principal concerns of the present Pope. North America must come to the aid of this continent by supplying priests. Already Maryknoll has undertaken this work; its priests are doing an extraordinary job under extremely difficult circumstances, but their heroic work is not sufficient.

It must also be said that unhappily the Church in Latin America is not fully aware of the present social upheaval. The general impression is that the religious authorities still live in the past. They are sustained by the myth of a Catholic Latin America, by the spectacle of great pilgrimages and mass demonstrations which produce religious expressions that are doubtless real enough but often prove deceptive as to the actual situation. Many of the clergy do not seem to realize that if Catholicism has been preserved, even under the painful circumstances experienced by the Latin American Continent during the last century, it is because of that continent's rural character. But in the current—and future—industrial and urban upheaval the Church will experience the same shocks that Catholicism has suffered in the larger cities of Europe. The only hope of emerging victorious from this great crisis is first of all to recognize its existence and to analyze it realistically.

Fortunately, there are currents of hope in South American Catholicism. Here and there priests (generally the younger clergy) and laymen are becoming conscious of the revolutionary nature of the situation in which they live. No doubt they still comprise a very small minority, but a renewal is beginning.

GUARANTEED WAGE

To Own or Not to Own

THE brief encounter between Henry Ford II and Walter Reuther during the negotiations for a guaranteed annual wage was one of the most significant and interesting in recent labor history.

Young Mr. Ford, president of the company, had not taken part in the sessions between leaders of the United Auto Workers, CIO, and his executives. On Thursday, May 26, with the strike deadline only a few days away, the company negotiators offered the union a large package tied up with pretty ribbon and full of a number of things, none of which was the guaranteed annual wage.

The most unusual thing in it was a stock participation plan whereby Ford workers would be able to buy stock in the company at half price. Mr. Ford called the offer "a partnership prosperity package" and, judging from his enthusiasm for it, I would not be surprised if he contributed much to it himself.

It was an idea that has a good deal to commend it, including excerpts from the papal encyclicals. After all, what would be nicer than to make all the Ford employees partners in the Ford Motor Company, sharing in ownership, management and profits—not sharing much perhaps, but still, sharing? All sorts of good things might flow from such a relationship, including a new era of labor-management peace, harmony and good fellowship.

Walter Reuther and the UAW, however, responded that there was one thing nicer than the "partnership prosperity package" and that was the guaranteed annual wage. In short, they still wanted it and if they didn't get it, they were damned well going to strike. They dismissed the stock purchase plan somewhat unkindly as "crumbs for the worker" and a "big stock melon" for executives to cut up.

At this point Reuther sent an open telegram to Ford inviting him to attend the negotiations. Mr. Ford replied in a telegram which opened with the words, "I feel that no useful purpose can be served by my appearance. . ." But from the safety of a public statement he felt he could let himself go a little. It was a fatal mistake. In extolling the company's "partnership prosperity package" he said this:

"In your wire to me you refer to the 'democratic processes of the UAW-CIO.' In the interest of the democratic process, as I understand it, I hope you

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will be able to satisfy yourself that any decision you and the council may reach today truly reflects the opinion and the reaction to the Ford proposal of the men and women of the Ford Motor Company whom you represent." The next day the company followed with full-page ads in newspapers the country over presenting the proposal directly to the Ford employees over Henry Ford's signature.

Like a boxer who feints his opponent into making a lead and then uses the opening to apply the crusher, Reuther then whipped over his hard right cross. He seized upon Ford's appeal to the rank-and-file to challenge the company to a vote. The employees would vote on whether they preferred the company's "partnership prosperity" or the union's guaranteed annual wage, and the UAW would agree to go along with the result if Ford would do the same.

That was the last that was heard from Henry Ford II and just about the last, too, of the "partnership prosperity package." A few days later (June 6th) Reuther burst grinning out of the Silver Room of the Detroit Leland Hotel, where round-the-clock negotiations had been going on. "We've got an agreement, boys," he said to the waiting reporters.

WHAT Reuther had was not only an agreement, but a small revolution. Guaranteed wage plans date back to at least 1894, but this was the first such plan to go into effect in a major company of a major industry anywhere in the world.

Naturally, the union did not get everything it wanted, and maybe it is just as well. Instead of one hundred per cent of take-home pay (including unemployment compensation) they had to settle for nothing the first week of unemployment, then sixty-five per cent for four weeks, and then sixty per cent for twenty-two weeks to a maximum of twenty-six weeks in any one year and a maximum payment of $25 per week.

The twenty-six week limitation has led people to call this a "guaranteed semi-annual wage." Actually, since seasonal unemployment in most auto companies, including Ford, is much less than twenty-six weeks per year, the odds are that for the average auto worker this represents the equivalent of an annual wage.

There were other pleasant things in the package. In brief, the Auto Workers tied themselves up for three years and in addition to the well publicized guaranteed annual wage they won pension improvements, wage increases and other assorted goodies for a total value of about $8.00 per week. A few days later they took a similar bundle from General Motors affecting 375,000 workers—as compared with 140,000 at Ford. When last seen Reuther and company were headed for Chrysler.

Meanwhile the guaranteed wage had already spread to the electrical industry through a General Motors contract with the CIO Electrical Workers, and to the shipping industry through a new contract of East Coast shipowners with the National Maritime Union, CIO.

DOES all this represent a defeat for the spirit of the encyclicals, as some might infer from observations on Ford's share-ownership proposal earlier in this piece? I do not think so. After all, the Popes have also said a great deal about the need for a living, saving, family wage. In *Quadragesimo Anno* Pius XI spoke of the need of freeing the workingman "from that hand-to-mouth uncertainty that is the lot of the proletarian." And in *Divini Redemptoris* he declared that "Social justice cannot be said to have been satisfied . . . as long as they [*i.e.*, the wage earners] cannot make suitable provision through public or private insurance for old age, for periods of illness and unemployment."

First things first. It is only right and proper that industrial workers should be concerned first for enough money to feed, clothe and house their families three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. After that is secured, then they will be more likely to go for schemes designed to increase their interest and real participation in the business. I think, too, there is a lesson here for all us starry-eyed distributists and critics of the industrial system.

Henry Ford should be neither ashamed nor discouraged about what has happened and I don't imagine that he is. At any rate his board chairman, Ernest Beech, is going around telling people that the plan is "good for the workers, good for the company, good for the whole country." I believe that is an accurate statement. I believe that Henry Ford has behaved far more like a good employer in working out this plan with Reuther and the UAW than if he had pushed his employees to a strike rather than give up on his "partnership package."

Between 1937 and 1950 the United Auto Workers struck Ford twice, General Motors twice, and Chrysler four times in walkouts ranging from nine days to one hundred and thirteen days. I suppose it couldn't be done in any less painful way, but it does seem that at last, after all that, the auto industry is growing up. Steel has also shown signs lately of incipient maturity. True, the National Association of Manufacturers goes on making the same childish noises it always has, but if auto and steel are putting on long pants, how much longer can the NAM get away with short pants, slingshots and pea-shooters? It gives a man reason for hope.

JOHN C. CORT.

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FROM FRANCE

Bitter Harvest In Algeria

THE news from Algeria gets more and more alarming. Since November when there were several uprisings, France has sent some hundred thousand troops into the *département* of Constantine, where the unrest is greatest. Martial law has been voted, which permits the French administration to take all necessary measures to restore tranquillity and maintain order in the threatened areas.

Much jailing and placing under surveillance has taken place. Yet acts of violence become more and more numerous, more and more bold. Native collaborators with the French administration have been killed, military posts attacked, patrols wiped out. The region is mountainous, extremely picturesque and very well adapted for guerrilla warfare. When I visited there last November, the Governor General's office estimated the number in revolt to be from four to five hundred. Today conservative estimates place the figure at two thousand, and even this is considerably below the real total of those involved, since the guerrillas are not alone responsible for the disorders that are taking place. When six miles of telegraph posts are cut down in a single night in the north Constantine sector, and twenty-five thousand vine stalks are pulled up by the roots in another district, an important segment of the village populations must also be involved.

In spite of the reassuring words of the French authorities I cannot help wondering whether we are not about to witness the preliminaries of that war in Algeria which many thoughtful observers have been predicting for ten years. 1955 in Algeria seems in many ways the equivalent of 1946 in Indochina. I wonder what will happen if the French forces admit that they are unable to subdue the rebel bands or if the Moslem village population is no longer content with silent support of the guerrillas but shifts to active collaboration.

On one side are a million Europeans; their army is large and equipped with modern matériel, yet it is not trained for guerrilla fighting and is unfamiliar with the terrain. Opposing them are nine million Moslems, the great majority of whom do not want war and its horrors but nevertheless view sympathetically the exploits of the guerrillas—whom the Algerian youth already regard as fighters for national liberation. These nine million Moslems cannot help desiring—with their brothers in the Near East and Far East—political liberation and the achievement of their national independence.

No matter how overwhelming the military supremacy of the French may seem, clear-headed analysis of the prospect can produce only fears for the worst. If we French decide on a policy of force and suppression, the areas held by the Algerian maquis are so vast and impenetrable that pursuit would be an endless task. What suppression was possible would fall upon a population of non-combatants, who would harden in their hostility toward France. If the maquis widen their domain, the life of the French colonists will become more and more precarious, especially in the South; raids on isolated farms will multiply and at the same time terrorism will make its appearance in the large cities of the Coast. There, thousands of jobless constitute ready-made recruits for the rebel forces. If this happens, the situation will degenerate rapidly on the Indochinese pattern. And it will happen unless there is a wholehearted investigation of the causes of the present unrest and a determined effort to apply immediate remedies. For this military conflict also has economic and social roots even though such notions are taboo among most French officials when they speak of Algeria.

IT would be foolish to deny that Algeria has extremely grave economic and social problems. Here are some pertinent figures. Seven hundred thousand families are absolutely indigent. The average annual income of the people of Algeria, both European and Moslem, is one-quarter of the average national income in France. That means, if the extremely wealthy are taken into account, that several million Algerians live on an income of only thirty dollars a year, to take care of everything, including food. The average acreage owned by Europeans is ten times the size of that owned by the Moslems. Two thirds of the holdings of the Algerian Moslems are too small to provide a living. Only one-sixth of the able-bodied inhabitants are employed, full or part time.

As the birth rate continues to rise, as it does today in the underdeveloped countries, the annual increase in population is over two hundred and fifty thousand, while less than fifteen thousand new jobs open up each year. For the Moslem masses, Algeria is not only a country of hunger and poverty but a land of despair. Up to now, a certain Moslem fatalism has led the people to accept this tragic state of things with resignation; but the younger generation, which has learned to read and also listens to foreign radio broadcasts, compares its lot with that of the youth of Europe and demands a change.

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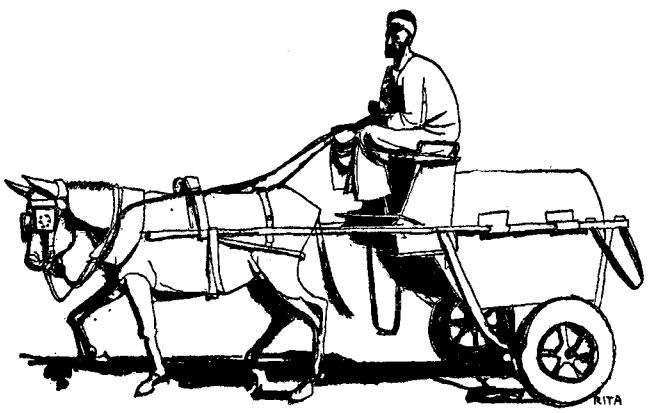
These young people are now convinced that French colonialism is unable to supply the remedy for such evils. The disparity in social conditions, the delay in realizing the economic potential of the soil and the resources that lie beneath it they ascribe to the political set-up—that is to say, the dominance of the European elements hypocritically kept up even after 1947. They feel that the Algerian economy has remained a colonial economy designedly, that the French colonials and French capitalism have followed an absurd policy of economic malthusianism by preventing the development of local processing industries.

THE list of blunders made here could be extended indefinitely, to the point of launching into the proverbial anti-colonial diatribe. Yet all the French colonials should not be charged indiscriminately with such crimes. The great majority are not conscious of the misery of the Moslems who surround them; more accurately, they have always beheld the Algerians living under such conditions. Besides, there are many Frenchmen and officials who strive to ameliorate conditions.

Under the present set-up there seems to be little doubt that it will be impossible to attack the basic problems. For one hundred and fifty years Algeria has been politically dominated by a caste of powerful Frenchmen — large landowners and businessmen. Through the Radical Party, which they support with their subsidies, they have up to now succeeded in paralyzing every reforming effort on the part of the home government that would attack their privileges or question the established order. The way this opposition works was well illustrated in the fall of Mendès-France a few months ago.

In principle, Algeria is an integral part of the French Republic. By the law of 1947 the former "French possessions in the north of Africa" became three *départements* of France. All Algerian Moslems became French citizens. "What is their complaint?" certain French patriots say. "Do they not have voting papers? Are they not our equals now?"



But here is a striking example of the fact that political emancipation is not enough. A genuine democracy must also be rooted in economic and social realities. "The interests" in Algeria resolved the difficulty in the following way: the electorate is divided into two distinct colleges—in one are the Europeans and sixty thousand advanced Moslems; in the other the Moslem masses, or nine-tenths of the population. This second college can elect but half of the deputies, representatives and general councillors and two-fifths of the municipal councillors.

Even this means of stifling Moslem aspirations was not considered sufficient; the French administration has systematically avoided all electoral consultations since 1947. In France the expression, "elections Algerian style" has come to be synonymous with "elections Soviet Russian style."

Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Algerian people are disgusted with the way in which France appears to conceive of political democracy. They complain of being unable to make their aspirations understood through responsible representatives. For several years now many have not even bothered to vote. Why should they not be tempted to listen to those who say that direct action is the only way out?

I must repeat, however, that the root of the problem is political. I have no doubt that if the statute of 1947 had been faithfully lived up to, if France had not gone back on her word, most Algerians would not now reject the policy of integration with the homeland. Until 1940, indeed, their most ardent wish was to become French citizens. Today I can say with all certitude that it is too late, for the twenty-year-olds are aiming at something else: the Algerian nation.

"We are nine million Moslems," the young people say. "Our race, culture, religion and customs are different from those of the French. Why then are you so determined to assimilate us? Can we not reach an understanding which respects our differences?" The Europeans then retort that Algeria has been built up and modernized for one hundred and thirty years through the labor and sacrifices of many non-Moslems. They assert that if an Algerian nation were set up tomorrow the Moslems would not have élites capable of operating the delicate administrative and technical machinery of a modern society. Besides, what fate would be reserved for the million Europeans? Would they not be reduced to second-class citizens as in other Moslem countries? What would become of the rights they have acquired by their own hard work?

THE problems are not simple ones. But it does not seem impossible to me that within the framework of a lay Algerian republic the French eco-

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nomic interests could be solidly guaranteed. There is a precedent in Tunisia to show that solutions can always be found when people sincerely wish to reach them. Moreover, the Algerians do not demand independence immediately. The Moslems ask simply that, instead of "Algeria is France," the relationship be put this way: "The Algerian nation federated with France."

The separation into the two distinct electoral colleges provided in the 1947 statute cannot be kept up indefinitely, however—nor can the proportional divisions of the two elements of the population. One day, if the policy of integration should be carried through to its conclusion, and Algeria really became France, Moslem Algeria would be entitled to some one hundred and twenty-five seats in the French Parliament. When you think how much the ten or fifteen votes of the Radical Deputies can do to influence French destiny, such a development might mean that the Moslem deputies would become the real arbiters of the political situation in France. We should think twice before taking action with such consequences.

Reason and the nature of things point to the continuing Westernizing and modernizing of Algeria. Algerian youth is in favor of this course. But at the same time should we not abandon a policy which threatens to end in an impasse and, in any case, is rejected by those most directly concerned? The only peaceful solution would be to allow the Algerian Moslems to choose their representatives freely in elections that are not rigged. The next step would be to consult with these representatives on the political future of Algeria either in an official conference or through a specialized commission.

Algerian Republic, domestic autonomy, federated nation, North African Confederation—whatever it should be, the juridical solutions which would permit the French to protect the essential of their many economic, strategic and cultural interests are not lacking. Such discussions would at least have the immediate merit of removing the psychological blocs involved in the problem, for they would show the Algerian Moslems that this time we would no longer dispose of their fate without consulting them.

But I am obliged to conclude on an extremely pessimistic note. Common sense, justice, and moderation are not notions that greatly preoccupy the men who now conduct our Algerian policy in Paris and Algeria. We have every reason to fear that the discussion is to take place with guns on the table. Our economist A. Sauvy says ten thousand influential men run France. Between negotiation, which involves certain risks, and a policy of force, which will end in catastrophe, the ten thousand have chosen the second alternative.

ROBERT BARRAT.

THE STAGE

THE DRAMA AS DISGUST

IN an essay which has yet to be published in this country, Mr. Lionel Trilling—writing of the enormous development of personality and self-consciousness in the modern sensibility, the demand for being and status, the insatiable impulse of ideality—notes as its most extreme assertion "the spirit . . . of self-pity become a principle of gratuitous, as-it-were-creative destructiveness." Nazism, Mr. Trilling finds, represented the political manifestation of the spirit, "and in Europe there has been an imposing line of talent, even of genius, which represents the literary manifestation. In France—to take but one national example—it appears in Baudelaire and Rimbaud and becomes more explicit in such writers as Jarry and Lautreamont and Celine. The sadism and *schadenfreude*, which these men celebrate and exemplify, is usually explained as an oblique moral response to the immorality of society. These are the men, we might say, who have carried . . . categories of personal judgment to their limit. It is they who speak in the name of sincerity and in hatred of vulgarity, their rage at the loss of sincerity from the world and at the dominance of vulgarity being so great that it can be expressed only by fantasies of sadistic destruction of the most extravagant kind."

One could not more explicitly describe the quality and intention of "The Maids," a drama by the notorious French writer Jean Genet, which is being given so admirable a production at the Tempo Playhouse. This savage and claustral dramatic poem is one of the most impressive of contemporary works for the theater: with a ruthless and infinitely corrupted sensibility, it explores the fantasy world of two French domestics and their fashionable mistress—a world where neither reality nor appearance are constant, and in which murder and suicide are the agents of some profound and punishing disgust of spirit. Ostensibly, the terms of the "The Maids" are those of class antagonism; ultimately, it is concerned with the mystery of identity and the kinds of being which the self may elect to assume and value. I am not certain that Genet has not been seduced by the brilliant facilities of the subjective truth canard: he seems to be duped by them as, say, Pirandello—dealing, in "Right You Are," with a similar theme—has not been. Yet one does not write drama about epistemology alone, and even without its perversely imposed scheme, the residual human substance of "The Maids" is everywhere resonant, various, dense: if it is ultimately—literally, morally—meaningless, we are aware, nonetheless, of the violent pressure of imagination

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on one of the wounds of the modern spirit. The performance, too, is in every way professional, achieving genuine power in the extravagant beauty of Julie Bovasso's playing: out of purely personal resources, Miss Bovasso fashions a smoky cave of the mind, against the vaulting walls of which the self is projected in massive images of a haunting and bestial shape.

The evening at the Playhouse begins with two brief interludes in Miss Gertrude Stein's most absolute manner, the gnomic tragedy "In a Garden," and the melodrama of childish diversion, "Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters." Nothing if not *sui generis*, Miss Stein is here at the happy zenith of her particular genius: the singleness and thrust of her intention, the sudden glint of mind, the lyrical, disengaged wit are wholly charming. Grasping too: something eerie sifts through the 'free association': decidedly these three sisters who are not sisters are three children who are *not* children, and one is moved at the last to understand that Miss Stein is making an oblique but intense statement about the nature of personality and egotism. Again the production is distinguished: Mr. Strowan Robertson's direction excellent (in the Genet also) and the playing full of a carefully studied bravado and mockery which shades easily into terror. My own pleasure in the occasion was ample; to the skeptical I would say: bring to Miss Stein the *tabula rasa* of imagination, and a memory of Mr. Edmund Wilson's cautionary observation that one had better not speak of nonsense until he is sure of what sense consists. (*At the Tempo Playhouse, 4 St. Mark's Place.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

THREE SHRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT

WHATEVER you may think of the ideas in Joseph Kramm's play, "The Shrike," the stage production did have a terrific wallop. You almost came away with the screaming meemies after watching José Ferrer go through the psychiatric ward at Bellevue and then wind up in the custody of Judith Evelyn, the mean, overzealous wife who drove him to his suicide attempt in the first place. The movie version, somewhat watered down in the script Ketti Frings wrote from Kramm's play, won't send you away screaming, but the whole business is still grim enough to set your nerves on edge and force you into a few unpleasant thoughts about shrike-like wives.

No doubt the biggest surprise in the movie is the casting of June Allyson in this role of the possessive wife who has no understanding of how she's driving her husband to despair. While I have no objection to this off-beat kind of casting, (it has even proved advantageous in many movies), the Hollywood star system has so often cast sweet June as the wife of Jimmy Stewart and other likeable males that it's almost impossible now to see her quite as grasping and self-centered as "The Shrike" wants to make her.

José Ferrer, who directs as well as plays the lead role in the movie, concentrates pretty much on himself in the psychiatric ward and in the long flashback in which he relates the steps that led to it. We get to know this insecure, unhappy man well; and his turning to the young actress (Joy Page) who builds up his ego is understandable. But we do not get to know his wife very well; we just seem to learn of her need to mother him and her almost obsessive desire to make him depend on her. With June Allyson, this role should have been more carefully delineated, especially after the psychiatrist suggests she is the one who needs treatment.

Probably because the original play received so much adverse criticism in regard to the psychiatrists' attitudes, the movie has made these characters more humane. Kendall Clark and Isabel Bonner are excellent as the two main doctors treating the confused husband. The hospital attendants are still pretty tough muggs, though, and in fact, almost everything about "The Shrike" is likely to make you want to steer clear of psychiatry or any kind of treatment in a red-tape-ridden public hospital. However, although the movie version of "The Shrike" has softened the ironic ending of the play, the film will hold you absorbed from its exciting beginning to its ambiguous finale.

NOW that CinemaScope is here to stay, the movie makers are going to have to learn not to let it run away with their movies. "House of Bamboo" has been beautifully photographed in Japan in De Luxe Color and in the widescreen technique, and if its story (about some ex-GIs who try to set up an organization in Tokyo similar to the gangster mobs during Prohibition) is more than a trifle old hat, its backgrounds are most certainly not. All the exterior scenes have points of local color that make them fascinating; and the Japanese actors in the film are extremely successful in portraying these people as people and not as types. Shirley Yamaguchi is extraordinarily lovely as the heroine, but the Americans come through as only second best. This is mainly the fault of Director Samuel Fuller and scriptwriter Harry Kleiner who saw fit to treat a quite ordinary

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gangster story as a mystery of rare vintage but little depth. Villains Robert Ryan and Cameron Mitchell and hero Robert Stack try hard enough, but their efforts don't add up to much. "House of Bamboo" provides a handsome tour of Japan decorated not with cherry blossoms but with Hollywood-type gunmen and chases.

TO turn to something pleasant, there's "The Seven Little Foys." It has its grim side, in that Eddie Foy was pretty neglectful of his family before his wife's death, but it also has its amusing and heart-warming moments in the latter half of the film when Eddie repented and tried to be a good father to his brood of seven. Instead of playing Hope as he does in most of his comedies, Bob Hope portrays the famous vaudevillian as he was and as he is written in the good script by Jack Rose (who also produced) and by Melville Shavelson (who also directed). Bob doesn't make quite clear why Eddie was such a woman-hater, or why he saw so little of his family, (even on the night of his wife's death), but he does come through beautifully as the father who can't quite cope with seven unruly kids until he decides to put them in his vaudeville act. And the act, I'm pleased to report, is as corny in the movie as it was in real life—with papa carrying on in grand style and the talentless kids hamming it up on every occasion. Milly Vitale, Angela Clarke, George Tobias and an awful lot of kids rally around Bob for this sweet-sad movie; and James Cagney is magnificent in one lovely nostalgic scene in which he and Hope do a series of competitive soft-shoe dances as George M. Cohan and Foy. It's good to see Bob Hope playing a different kind of role in a different kind of picture.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"BELIEF AND THE WRITER"

New Rochelle, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In the discussion of the interesting and important problem of "Belief and the Writer," [May 13], several of the contributors have utilized the works of Chaucer, among others, as a focal point in their investigations. Without pretending to further the progress of or to shed light upon any of the larger thematic points under scrutiny, I should like to examine briefly some of the hackneyed and to my mind erroneous critical phrases which have somehow clustered about the author of *The Canterbury Tales*. Although it was Mr. Martin Turnell who first introduced Chaucer's name into the discussion when he spoke of ". . . the contrast between Chaucer's kindly, tolerant attitude towards his fellow men and the disgust bordering on plain hatred that we find alike in Eliot, Mauriac and Greene," I should like to concentrate my attention on the recent letter by Mr. Michael J. Novak, C.S.C. [June 17], in which he repeats approvingly Martin Turnell's statement and then proceeds to expand upon it.

Ignoring for a moment Mr. Novak's concern at the omission of any reference to Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* (an omission which, at the present moment, would be unlikely to trouble M. Maritain), the possible Calvinistic overtones of some of his statements ("We are a hateful race to begin with"), and his somewhat startling remarks about a modern world which demands " . . . far more courage than the too easily labelled allegorical worlds of Dante and Bunyan"—ignoring these somewhat debatable points, let us look more closely and, I hope, more critically at the picture of Chaucer as he has emerged from the pages of several recent issues of The Commonweal.

It has always puzzled me that the author who created the physically and morally grotesque Summoner; the blandly hypocritical Pardoner (the one soul among the pilgrims who, it is said, is most certainly damned); the lascivious, thieving Friar; the worldly, gluttonous Monk; the querulous, vindictive Reeve; the coarse, drunken Miller; the physically repulsive Cook; the pretentious, rule-breaking Prioress—it has, I repeat, continually amazed me that the author of such poison pen portraits should be so consistently referred to as the "kindly, tolerant [Chaucer)]" and as a man who displayed a "love of human beings as they are." Now, the clear implication of such critical clichés is that Chaucer never even so much as hinted that these creatures of his artistic imagination were morally reprehensible, a point of view which, I believe, cannot be supported by the text. I would suggest that those who insist on holding and propagating such views about Chaucer re-read the works themselves, relying upon the powers of their own critical intellects rather than on what many of the critics have told us we ought to find in Chaucer. I would recommend, as a starter, "The Merchant's Tale," a work unique for its unrelieved acidity and cynicism, plus of course, the General Prologue. Even a casual reading of the texts must make one hesitant about repeating glib adjectives and stock clichés about a mythically tolerant Chaucer.

As disturbing as this doctored portrait of Chaucer is to me, I find even more distressing some of the inferences which Mr. Novak deduces from his shaky premise. From "tolerance" to complicity is but an easy step—as witness these words of Mr. Novak:

> But his sometimes ambiguous "tolerance" I fear occasionally approaches nearer to complicity—as

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feared the author of the *Retractions*—than any of the hatefulness with which Mauriac, Greene and Eliot describe, and thereby castigate, our modern mediocrity.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Novak cites as evidence for Chaucer's complicity the famous *Retraction*. Assuming for the moment (as most modern scholars do) that the *Retraction* legitimately belongs in the Chaucer canon, we still have the task of determining what the palinode meant in terms of the historical moment at which it was written. When we recall that to the medieval writer the literary occupation consisted in using one's talents for God and Church, in directly raising men's minds and hearts toward God, in engaging oneself, in short, in the most obvious and blatant kind of didacticism, it becomes clear why the medieval author felt it incumbent upon him to retract his "worldly" artifacts. It was only from this narrow, relative point of view that Chaucer felt some of his tales to be immoral. Such an interpretation of the *Retraction* becomes even more convincing when we recall Chaucer's advice to the *fastidious* reader (it was quite patently a question of taste rather than morals) to skip the *fabliaux* if he found such tales disagreeable to his palate. The final objection to the *fabliaux* as immoral tales disappears when we consider that scenes from these ribald poetic narratives were used to decorate the Gothic cathedrals. Certainly complicity, in connection with the writing of the "merry tales" never presented itself as a problem to the medieval man of letters.

It is not my intention to cavil, to play the role of the pedant. I have merely attempted to suggest that the interpretation of Chaucer as presented by two of your contributors is, at best, questionable. If my objections are countenanced, we will perhaps see the substitution of someone else in place of Chaucer by those seeking a polarity between another age and our own. As a further result, some of your future contributors to the question of belief and the writer might tend to hesitate before hurling the epithet *complicity* at any of the writers being discussed. Since the problem of complicity or collusion is a highly problematic one, incapable of any simplistic explanation, I for one would be happy to see the avoidance of such terms, whether the discussion be centered upon Eliot, Mauriac or Greene, not to mention Geoffrey Chaucer.

JAMES J. GREENE,
Department of English,
College of New Rochelle.

"IS STARVATION INEVITABLE?"

Paris, France

TO the Editors: In Michael Fogarty's article, "Is Starvation Inevitable?" [June 3], he alludes to the role of youth leaders in the essential problem of the transportation "of a culture, it goes without saying, which uses Western experience but is offered to the underdeveloped countries in a form suiting their own conditions for their free acceptance."

In his article he refers to the World Assembly of Youth's Centre in Ceylon in the transmission of the foregoing information. For the information of your readers, I would like to elaborate on the work of youth leader-training that we are about to undertake in Ceylon.

Our Centre—it is called "Ceylon Centre for Advanced Study and Training"—will attempt to impart the principle of leadership training to representative world youth leaders. We have named the Centre "Aloka," which means "light." It is situated at Haputale, some one hundred miles from Colombo.

The Centre will offer three separate courses for future trainers of youth leaders in: agricultural and village development; industrial and town organizations; and universities and colleges. The courses will each be for a three-month period, with the accent on the direction, supervision and counseling of the students (youth trainers) throughout the series of discussions, field work, practices, reflections, etc., which will constitute each course and make available to the students the many resources at and outside of the Centre. Essentially, the emphasis is on the student as a whole person, who will be completely involved in all that will take place at the Centre. Without this involvement there would be no guarantee that increased knowledge would be reflected in behaviour and that heightened conviction and enthusiasm would not run to waste in frustration through lack of comparable skill. So, for instance, some time will be allocated to working with one's hands, handicrafts, gardening and farming. The residential facilities provide scope for this all-round training.

The aim of the Director of the Institute is to secure candidates who have had several years experience as leaders and/or administrators, and who will have the certain opportunity to train others. Great importance will be attached to the possibility of securing for the same course two candidates from the same locality and/or organization, to help provide each other with the necessary support when they return home after training. The applicants for the first course, agricultural and village development, starting on September 23rd, already represent: India, the Philippines, Gold Coast, Malaya, Colombia, Lebanon, with others expected from Singapore and Pakistan.

The Director, Mr. Rolf Lynton—formerly on the staff of the British Institute of Management and the faculty of Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration—and his wife—also formerly associated with the Graduate School of Business Ad-

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ministration, Harvard University—will constitute the permanent faculty, with United Nations Technical Assistance Boards and UN Specialized Agencies, the Colombo Plan offices, Departments of Agriculture, Health and Education, and the University of Ceylon, comprising the source of the visiting faculty.

As Mr. Fogarty states, "our job is to develop men and only incidentally to develop land or resources." It is with this conviction that we attempt, independently of governments, to go forth in our attempt at education and formation.

FRANK FERRARI,
Assistant Secretary General.

OF NOTE

WAR ON STARVATION

DEEPLY concerned with the terrible fact of starvation that continues in many parts of the world year after year, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations has issued the following statement from its headquarters in Paris:

We women of the whole world, impelled by our very nature to give life, to protect life, to foster life, can no longer tolerate seeing the frontiers of starvation stamped across our globe in the features of death. We Catholic women, called by Christ to bear witness to a universal love embracing all the human family, can never resign ourselves to accept the fact that more than half of humanity is in a habitual state of starvation. We refuse to see lazy and criminal solutions brought to bear on this tragic problem: war, birth control, false and useless solutions—the solutions of death. We know, and wish to make known, that there exist life-giving solutions, and that if world conscience reacts, the boundaries of starvation will be swept away in a few generations.

This certainty is based on scientific research backed up by official and private international organizations, such as the Technical Program of the United Nations, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and various organizations concerned with migration, all of which are at work on this task. True, the task is a huge one, but the technical possibilities of our time can meet the challenge. True, it demands powerful methods of action, such as are at present controlled by governments, methods that must be coordinated on an international level. But if it is to be effective, such action must be prompt and widespread, which cannot come about unless it is powerfully supported by world opinion, which lies, to a great extent, in our hands.

We women of sixty nations, grouped to the number of thirty-six millions within the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, have at our disposal through the millions of copies of our national bulletins a unique method of penetrating into homes throughout the world. We shall also bring the problem to the attention of those sections of the press able to put the essential tasks of our time before their readers. For the same ends, we shall approach those responsible for shaping policy in the field of the cinema, radio and television. We shall ask of these great channels of information that they blast a trail in the minds of men towards an economy based on need, instead of the existing economy based on pure profit.

We shall support the efforts of those official and private institutions already striving to resolve the problem in a positive manner, conforming to the dictates of the human and Christian conscience. We shall make known the progress of science, which, if used for peaceful ends conforming to the thought of the Creator, can speedily raise the standard of living of all humanity. We shall increase our help to the migration services.

Both through our associations and more widely still, we shall give an impetus to domestic science training, and to domestic economy, in the knowledge that one key to the problem is to be found in a more rational use of available nutritional resources, by the women in every home in the world. We shall remind the more favored nations of their duty to live soberly. Finally, together with others, we shall support "path-finding" projects whose putting into effect is already the subject of research. Our world Congress, due to take place in Rome, in April 1956, will be the starting point of widespread action. Preliminary study is already under way.

In the struggle against starvation in the world, a single obstacle could prove insurmountable: the belief that victory is impossible. As it is, united, and acting with all those pledged to the same task, we can achieve more than we think. No more is needed to begin. We declare war on starvation.

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The Poet Revealed to His Friends

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS AND R. W. DIXON. THE LETTERS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS TO ROBERT BRIDGES. Edited with notes and an introduction by Claude Coller Abbot. Oxford. $11.50.

By NED O'GORMAN

AT his desk a man is forever the victim of his heart. The image of his most deep self is the power that holds the pen and keeps the paper steady. Correspondences seldom conceal anything, for in the long passage of the hidden fear and conscious joy to the waiting friend much of what a man cannot write about is written and much of what he does not dare say is said. These volumes reach deeply into the inner life of a poet who was burdened with a weakness of body that came from no ill health and a sorrow of spirit that came from no ignorance of the world's beauty. Masked with an exquisite haughtiness and an intricate purity of intention, Gerard Hopkins writes beautifully and fully of his sweet struggle with the priest and that other self he calls the "blackguard." Here the complexity of his personality emerges.

The correspondence between Dixon and Hopkins started when Dixon was forty-six and Hopkins thirty-four. First was Hopkins's letter to Dixon in 1878 in which he writes with great excitement about the elder man's poetry, finding in a line like, "Her eyes like lillies shaken by the bees," an "extreme delight." Throughout his life he was pained terribly by loneliness, since neither life as priest or poet guarded him from the depths of sadness known to those whose place is not secure anywhere on the earth. His letters to Dixon, filled with admiration, grow into a most considered and, in the long run, unfavorable analysis. Most of Hopkins' praise goes to certain lines, and he had the annoying habit of beginning with a line of praise only to qualify it down to a riddle of complaint. In a world of Scotian essences where every thing is perfect in itself, there is no place for an "overperspectivness of mind" that speaks of the "rain wooing the rainbow," since the rainbow comes with the falling of rain. Dixon was too full of the didactic muse; when the lyric becomes didactic, it dies.

Their letters are affectionate and through the course of the correspondence Dixon stays behind, becoming the listener and the confidant, slow to pierce the mail of Hopkins' poetry. They hash out problems of rhyme, of sprung rhythm, Greek Mythology (which Hopkins, like Plato, found dangers in), Shakespeare's dramaturgy, the Pre-Raphaelites, and Tennyson. Hopkins' comments, excepting those on rhyme, are so laced in his own vision that one could well understand Dixon's bafflement at his criticism. Dixon seldom counters Hopkins' analysis: he could not since there was a real gap of understanding between them. Hopkins is especially disturbed at Dixon's inability to accept the greatness of Wordsworth's "Imitation" Ode. Hopkins took the older man's suggestions when they suited, i.e. the opening lines of the *Brothers,* though he misreads as often as he understands: Dixon reads,

> And you were a liar, o blue
> March day,
> Bright, sunlanced fire of the
> heavenly bay.

Hopkins wrote:

> Bright sun lanced fire in the
> heavenly bay.

Hopkins' great frailty was his too gentle courtesy, both toward himself and his surroundings. Dixon and Hopkins shared a lovely good nature; they were important to each other not because they were poets but because they were men to whom poetry was an important endeavor, though the one knew far more of the world than the other. Dixon's affection and closeness and his concern that Hopkins would stop writing must be seen as a vital part of the poet's life when writing poetry was at once the most profane and the most blessed thing in his life. I do not think Dixon ever became a "reader" of Gerard Hopkins, but he remained a great friend who knew the priest's holiness and the poet's genius without ever really gathering in his vision.

The letters to Bridges are quite another matter. One side of the correspondence is missing—something like Beethoven's violin concerto without the violin—though the silence adds, it seems, to the force of the letters. Then there is the matter of Bridges' understanding and his relationship to Hopkins' double life. Neither Dixon nor Bridges were "original" poets in the way Hopkins was original. Neither went into the grammar of poetry with the wildness that Hopkins did. The priest was always at the mercy of the logician, the scholar, and the Jesuits to whose several wills he subjected himself freely.

Bridges and Hopkins were on the outs on several points, not the least of which was the question of the Catholic Church. In their letters there is a frankness and openness that is lacking in the Dixon correspondence. When Bridges speaks cynically of the Corpus Christi procession, Hopkins asks him about his "diseased and varicose" cynical vein that bulks out and distorts his character. Their love was balanced by their disparate personalities. Perhaps this correspondence is the stronger because their characters did differ so.

Then there is the problem of Hopkins' methodology. Between it and his soul lay his genius. He was not a man formed by "sprung rhythm" as so many think; he is far greater than his technique, and his system is far more intuitive than it is scientific. (In this regard it is interesting to note Madame Wanda Landowska's comment on Bach's *The Well Tempered Clavicord,* that although there is science there, there is a great deal more than science). The difficulty of this is clear when Hopkins is explaining the syntax

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of "have" in the sonnet "Have fair Fallen" or the meaning of the action in "The Sea and the Skylark." It is quite impossible to separate the prosody and the form, one so dependent on the other in one way, and utterly independent in any sense of a science of rhyme.

In the Bridges correspondence, and in the Dixon letters to a lesser extent, there is a surge of growing sadness that breaks through the long letters on poesis. Happiness for Hopkins lay somewhere hid in the life of the priest and the poet; each life drew off energy and power as sure as a leech. Could it be that his consuming study of prosody was in a sense his answer to the tension of his double life? When he felt he could not write verse he felt he could write studies of verse. His essay on *Statistics and Free Will* "obeyed the general law and did not appear." I do not think his essays on Doric prosody were ever completed. The world gave of itself so much that it nearly destroyed its poet. "All my world is a scaffolding" he tells Bridges, and in another letter he writes:

> . . . soon I am afraid I shall be ground down to a state like this last spring's and summer's when my spirits were so crushed that madness seemed to be making approaches—and nobody was to blame, except myself partly for not managing myself better and contriving a change.

To paraphrase Cocteau, Hopkins' life was a constant shock of the intelligence against beauty, sounding so deep in his soul that at times:

> nature in all her parcels and faculties gaped and fell apart, *fatiscebat,* like a clod cleaving and holding only by strings of root. But this must often be . . .

These letters should be read again and again. They reveal the skeleton beneath the wizard and nothing is as grand as that anatomy.

> I cast for comfort I can no more get
> By groping round my comfortless, than blind
> Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
> Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

The Comic and the Sad

A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND: By Flannery O'Connor. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

By JAMES GREENE

WHEN Flannery O'Connor's first novel, *Wise Blood,* appeared three years ago it received wide and favorable mention. With the endemic restraint of his race, Evelyn Waugh remarked that "if this is the unaided work of a young lady it is a remarkable product." Miss O'Connor's second book, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find,* is a collection of short stories that have appeared in various, mostly little, magazines, and it reveals new aspects of her talent.

Scarcely thirty years old, and a Georgian both by birth and choice, Flannery O'Connor is not easily fitted into any identifiable group of Southern writers. She stands among, but is not of, them. To be sure, her characters have certain traits linking them with the Southern tradition in fiction: for the most part they are poor and rural folk dominated by the old ancestral fears—of death, the unknown, the foreign, and all the shadows of evil. But they are strangers to despair, and this is their distinction. They hold their fears at bay with a rustic religiosity that is as functional as their speech or dress.

Thus, in "The Displaced Person," when a woman encounters a Pole who threatens her husband's job, she quickly assumes the stance of righteousness: "She saw the Polish words, dirty and all-knowing and unreformed, flinging mud on clean English words until everything was equally dirty . . . God save me! she cried silently, from the stinking power of Satan! And she started from that day to read her Bible with a new attention." Yet, though these people fear the unknown, they also accept the counter-traditions of hospitality and curiosity: they invite the fearsome stranger to dinner; they visit the dreaded cities.

Individually, these stories hold up well, but in a collection where the age of the heroes ranges from four to one-hundred-and-four, the drives and motivations are perhaps too similar, and the natural divisions of character are often lost in Miss O'Connor's relentless vision. Still, such criticism is minor in face of the author's real achievement. For Miss O'Connor, with a direct, detached style, manages to preserve the complexity of the lives she takes up, and she has a musician's ear for the progress and qualities of sound that makes even the least of her tales a delight to read.

Among the best stories in this collection is one called "Good Country People". In it a crippled young woman, starved of love and attention, is convinced by a Bible salesman that he cares for her. Lured by him to the hayloft in a barn, she allows him to remove her mechanical leg, the cause of her isolation—and he runs away with it. This, of course, is a familiar "comic" device which may have originated on the American frontier, where mutilation was common. At any rate, the theme of "the man who comes apart" has long been a part of our literature.

Human dignity held together with paste and baling wire is not the most sensitive of themes, but it conveys, with its compound of grotesqueness, humor and instincitive compassion, some irreducible quality of life. Here, as in life, the comic and the sad are inextricably mixed. Miss O'Connor handles this idea with balance and delicacy; she fortifies her betrayed young lady against a complete demolishment of her dignity. She lifts a "comic" device to complex dimensions.

For though none of these stories is without humor, none escapes, either, a struggle against darkness. They are like tales told in a war tent, with tomorrow bringing mutilation and death, but this day's tale of life made sweeter by the expectation. Here, in rural miniature, are the primary intuitions of man. The storytellers of a race are seldom as young as Miss O'Connor. But talent is the only requirement, and with this second book the reputation of a superb storyteller should be well established.

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A Genius in Foreign Lands

WINTER NOTES ON SUMMER IMPRESSIONS. By Feodor M. Dostoevsky. With a Foreword by Saul Bellow. Criterion. $2.75.

By HENRY POPKIN

WHEN Dostoevsky visited France in 1862, he was primed by both instinct and theory to loathe all that he saw. *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions,* now published in English for the first time, is the incisive record of that loathing. Dostoevsky makes no bones about his total disapproval; there is no "fair-minded" effort to balance matters. As Saul Bellow correctly observes in his Foreword: "It is not for his fairness that he is famous."

Winter Notes belongs to the desperate guerrilla war that Dostoevsky fought in behalf of Russia against the West. His intense partisanship turns everything Russian and everything Western into armament for the campaign. What this traveler encounters cannot be merely seen; it has to be praised, denounced, or explained away, according to the needs of the great debate. His moments of relative objectivity or of Olympian irony are rare; perhaps one occurs when, unwillingly admiring the bridge at Cologne, he finds himself on the defensive and splutters, amid broken phrases: "We invented the samovar."

Dostoevsky's hostility to the West arises out of what he took to be a fundamental racial distinction. The Westerner is by nature self-centered, greedy, materialistic. The traveler finds "in French nature, and in Occidental nature in general . . . a principle of individualism, a principle of isolation, of intense self-preservation, of personal gain, of self-determination of the *I*, of opposing this *I* to all nature and the rest of mankind as an independent, autonomous principle entirely equal and equivalent to all that exists outside itself." The Russian, on the other hand, is capable of achieving community and that "voluntary, fully conscious self-sacrifice" which "must be an unconscious ingredient of the nature of the race."

These notable "racial" characteristics of the East—self-denial and the sense of community—became major themes of Dostoevsky's fiction. They rise to the surface for a second in the last scene of "The Eternal Husband," when, during a chance encounter in a railroad train, the worldly man and the cuckold briefly forget the hostility that the world requires of them: "In one instant something strange happened to both of them: both seemed transformed."

There is an effect similar to this when the angry, nameless hero of "Notes from Underground" is momentarily restored to humanity by his sympathy for a prostitute whom he knows he despises. This is the spontaneous, irrational human harmony which Dostoevsky values and the absence of which he discovers in the West.

Of the Westerners, the French turn out to be the worst. Possessed of all the typical European vices, they have the audacity to pretend to virtue, to take pride in themselves and in their nation. An instinctive hypocrisy colors every act of their lives. In their adulterous *maisons à trois,* they prate about the sanctity of the home. So far removed are they from any taste for what is natural that they prefer even the imitation of love to the reality. They take an empty pride in eloquence—without a thought for the content of their words—and an equally vain pride in their great men—without a thought of what they stood for. Nobility of manner is cultivated by everyone, but it is seen in its most fitting context as the sales clerk's stock in trade—a commodity he employs in an effort to overawe the impressionable customer.

To make a case against France was for Dostoevsky to indict all of the West: French prestige in Russia was enormous, and the French were *par excellence* the leaders of progressive thought. It

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was hardly necessary to seek corroborative evidence elsewhere. A sidetrip to London disclosed more chaos but less deceit, but, even without it, the annihilation of the West was complete.

Dostoevsky's portrait of France is not entirely unlike the one Balzac had been drawing only a few years before, but the difference is important. Although Balzac shows us people whose actions are almost invariably deplorable, he conscientiously explains these actions in the light of a great variety of personal motives and outside pressures. Dostoevsky, however, considers everything he sees in France to be not merely deplorable but outrageous, and to be explained only by its conformity with a grand master-plan of outrageousness. Fortunately, his fiction suggests that human character is more complicated than that. Perhaps it was only Russian character that he believed to be complicated; we are once more fortunate that in his fiction the distinction does not need to be made.

The Man Who Found a World

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, MARINER. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Atlantic-Little, Brown $3.75.

By JOHN COURNOS

LET it be said at the very beginning that this is the best yet of all short biographies of "one of the greatest mariners, if not the very greatest, of all time." Admiral Morison has previously written a much larger work on the same theme, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize. This new book has excellence in the tradition of direct English narrative. It has additional merit in that the author has an admirer's warm understanding of the magnitude of Columbus's project, an understanding enhanced by several voyages covering the same ground.

Admiral Morison confesses that the life and voyages of Columbus have been a hobby of his for almost fifty years, and once he had come to the conclusion that what Columbus wanted "was a sailor biographer, one who knew ships and sailing and who had visited, under sail, the islands and mainland that he discovered," he assiduously acted on this premise.

The mention of "mainland" in the foregoing quotation is in its way a jest—a cosmic jest one might say, and one of the great ironies of history. Surely, Providence could not have designed anything more tantalizing than the faith imposed on Columbus, a faith unshaken in spite of four voyages, that he had found what he sought: the approach to the Cathay of Marco Polo, the repository of the gold and gems and spices he had promised his chief patron, Queen Isabella of Spain, who believed in him. He could not understand why the ultimate goal eluded him. He had found many islands, and good and bad Indians, remarkable vegetation, and some gold; and he confided to his Journal

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that he had seen the Terrestrial Paradise, the Garden of Eden.

Yet, for all that, something was wrong. The natives were not really what he had expected, the promised material rewards were not up to what he had looked forward to. What he had found was clearly not China—nor Japan. Once he stretched the point to think Haiti might be Japan. And on his High Voyage, the fourth, he imagined he had found the key to the riddle, the key to his quest for the mainland of Asia.

At one point he assumed that the Island of Cuba was China; and where that island touches on the Gulf of Mexico he expected to find the strait through which Marco Polo sailed from China into the Indian Ocean. He had no suspicion of a vast Pacific Ocean standing between him and the goal of his Dream. Indeed he sailed down the entire mainland coast of the Caribbean, clear down to Darien (which was to harbor Balboa), without the least inkling that on one occasion a mere twelve-mile trek across land would have brought him within sight of the Pacific and to the startling solution of the mystery that baffled him.

Thus the great man died, ignorant of the magnitude of his discovery, "the most far-reaching," in the words of Admiral Morison, "in recorded human history." The hardships he suffered, the patience and competence and courage he revealed in crises, the censures he had to face from querulous stay-at-homes, make his life an epic rare among epics. As an Appendix the author offers the reader a translation of Columbus's long letter written on his first voyage, a narrative which adds no little to a Life already rich in substance and interest.

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